

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Residents & Taxpayers of the Village of Cold Spring
Director, New York State Division of the Budget

FROM: Dave Merandy, Mayor
The Board of Trustees

DATE: March 23, 2021

RE: EO203: New York State Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative

The following constitutes the Village of Cold Spring's submission in compliance with Executive Order 203.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

The Village of Cold Spring is a small river community in Putnam County, New York, about .6 miles square, nestled between the mountains of the Hudson Highlands and the Hudson River itself, within the Town of Philipstown. The Village is on the Metro-North Hudson train line, located about 50 miles north of New York City. There is a central business district along the Main Street, as well as a secondary commercial district with basic goods and services along the transverse New York State Route 9D. There is one K-12 public school within the bounds of the Village, and two nursery schools.

Recent Cold Spring Village-specific population data from the US Census is not yet available. Based on the 2010 decennial census, the population is estimated at just over 2,000; new development in the Village likely will have increased that number. The chart below represents basic demographic data from the 2010 census, contrasted with the most recent American Community Survey for the surrounding Town of Philipstown.

	Village of Cold Spring 2010 US Census	Town of Philipstown 2019 American Community Survey
Total Population	2,013	9,715
One Race	n/a	98%
Two or More Races	2.09%	2%
White	93.24%	93.2%
Black or African American	0.7%	1.6%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.3%	0.2%
Asian	2.05%	1.8%
Some other Race	1.49%	1.3%
Hispanic or Latino	5.76%	8.7%

	Village of Cold Spring 2010 US Census	Town of Philipstown 2019 American Community Survey
Median Household Income	\$53,382	\$113,0513
% Population Below Poverty Line	5.4%	5.6%3

Putnam County is roughly divided into eastern and western sides by the Taconic Parkway. The County seat, Carmel, is about twenty miles away, on the eastern side. Most public services, including social services, mental health services, and the Department of Motor Vehicles are located in and around Carmel. No public transportation exists between Cold Spring and the County seat. The Village does host a small primary care medical facility affiliated with New York Presbyterian/Cornell Weill Medical. Cold Spring is also located proximate to several more diverse urban and suburban areas. The cities of Beacon, Newburgh and Poughkeepsie are to the north, and the City of Peekskill is to the south. West Point Military Academy is just across the Hudson.

While many of Cold Spring's residents do commute to New York City and these other urban areas, the Village has a growing population of professionals and artists who work at home, as well as tradespeople. The long-term economic impacts of COVID-19 are likely to bring marked changes to the local workforce. Tourism is an economic driver; outdoor recreational opportunities abound in the New York State parks that surround Cold Spring. The Village has been popular with day hikers for some time, but in recent years its renown has grown exponentially. All through the COVID pandemic, the Village has received unprecedented numbers of visitors that have strained local infrastructure, roadways and first responder capacity.

VILLAGE LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE & BUDGET

Cold Spring is governed by an elected Mayor and four elected Trustees. Despite its small size, the municipality provides a full suite of services to its residents: water and sewer, code enforcement, police, highways, parks and recreation. The full and part-time staff is small, and the work is done on a trim annual budget of approximately \$3.7 million, inclusive of general fund, water, and sewer.

STRUCTURE OF THE COLD SPRING POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Cold Spring Police Department (CSPD) currently consists of ten part-time officers and a part-time Officer-in-Charge; 15 positions are authorized. The Officer-in-Charge reports directly to the Mayor and the Board of Trustees. The majority of CSPD's officers are retired from law

enforcement careers, while others continue to actively serve in regional police and fire departments full time, as well as in private security agencies. That means that despite the small size of our department, the Village is able to optimize a broad range of experience and training in areas including community policing, road patrol, narcotics, and investigations.

The CSPD provides 24/7 coverage in the Village, with standard A, B, and C shift lines (Midnight to 8am; 8am to 4pm; 4pm to Midnight); one officer per shift. 911 Dispatch is provided through interagency cooperation with the Putnam County Emergency Center and the Putnam County Sheriff's Office. Advanced investigative services, canine patrol, narcotics, crisis response and the school resource officer are also provided by the Sheriff's Office. The CSPD patrols receive and provide mutual support to Sheriff's Deputies stationed in Philipstown, and to the New York State Police. As tourism has expanded and visitor numbers have risen, our officers increasingly provide assistance to the New York State Park Police, even though aid is not mutual. Traffic, accidents, and hiker rescues place significant strain on our police department, as well as the Village's volunteer fire company and Philipstown's ambulance service.

The budget of the Cold Spring Police Department is presented below, for the last completed fiscal year (2019-2020).

	FY 2019-2020
Salaries – Officers	\$338,000
FICA – Officers	\$25,857
Pension – Officers	41,700
Salaries – Crossing Guards	\$22,476
FICA – Crossing Guards	\$1,719
Salaries – Parking Enforcement	\$3,978
FICA – Parking Enforcement	\$304
Equipment/Operating	\$86,283
<i>Total</i>	\$520, 318
<i>% of Overall Village Budget</i>	14%

POLICE ACTIVITY STATISTICS

The Officer-in-Charge makes a monthly report to the Board of Trustees and the public. Appendices 1a-1c contain summary statistics for the calendar years 2018-2020. Traffic and parking are the primary enforcement areas for the CSPD. Between 2018 and 2020, 1,060 traffic tickets were issued, most for disobeying a traffic control device (354) and speeding (321). Two thousand seven hundred and three (2,703) parking tickets were issued. There were 2,240 calls for service; top categories were 392 for aided cases--when CSPD officers respond to a sickness

or injury requiring medical attention, and 252 for mutual aid--assisting/backing up other law enforcement agencies such as the Putnam County Sheriff's Department or New York State Police. False alarms resulted in 424 calls. One hundred seventy-four (174) calls were to "assist a citizen," a category that includes such reports as suspicious activity, reports of missing property, lock-outs, etc. Property damage as part of auto accidents (PDAA) constituted 84 calls. In the same time period, there were 49 arrests: the top two categories were vehicle and traffic law charges (18) and penal law charges (15).

Regarding the use of force in Cold Spring, there have been no discharges of any type of non-lethal or lethal weapon in the line of duty by the CSPD in the last five years. Only two formal complaints against officers, filed for discourtesy, have been received in the last five years. Further, because of the limited racial and ethnic diversity in Cold Spring, bias-based incidents are not commonly reported, though several have been investigated since 2018. At the level of inquiry conducted to date there is no evidence that they are present in any significant way in relation to policing. Review of standard incident reports, standard arrest reports and summonses and tickets might be revelatory concerning the policing of the more diverse population that moves through the CSPD jurisdiction.

CSPD officers engage with residents and visitors in informal ways. In warmer weather, spending part of shifts on foot is encouraged by the Officer-in-Charge. As a result, officers have a largely positive rapport with and knowledge of residents and shopkeepers. Officers are also visible and engaged at our large community events, operate a "Dark House" program to monitor homes while residents are out of town, and have participated in the "Coffee with a Cop" series hosted in a Village coffeehouse.

DEVELOPMENT OF A POLICE REFORM AND REINVENTION PLAN FOR COLD SPRING

To date, the Mayor has established a working group consisting of two trustees, the Officer-in-Charge and another officer to focus concurrently on preparing new police policy for public review, and on formulating this plan for Cold Spring's Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative.

STAGE 1: REVIEW OF CURRENT COLD SPRING POLICE POLICIES

The Governor's Executive Order on police reform has been the impetus for a much-needed update of the Cold Spring Police Department's policies. Those currently in place were adopted in 2013, and were limited to broad categories of ethics, organization, personnel, regulations and property management. The policies relating to the use of force are dated and out of synch with best practices across New York State. It was clear that the first task for complying with EO 203 was to build a proper policy manual, as well as procedures, in line with modern, community policing.

After exploring options and observing the direction being taken by regional law enforcement agencies, the Officer-in-Charge proposed that Cold Spring enter into a contract with Lexipol, a national service that provides a “full library of customizable, state-specific law enforcement policies that are updated in response to new state and federal laws and court decisions.” The Cold Spring Trustees opted to on-board the accompanying Lexipol procedures manual, as well as ongoing officer training. Unlike the Village’s current, limited manual, the new policies will be comprehensive and range from sick leave to bias-based policing to comprehensive emergency management. Further, the Village Trustees believe there is value in having a baseline consistency among regional law enforcement departments, particularly those who give mutual aid to and receive mutual aid from the CSPD.

The onboarding of Lexipol has required the training of the Officer-in-Charge and one of the Village Trustees on the proprietary software. To date, a work plan has been established that prioritizes the review of policies directly relevant to Executive Order 203 (see Appendix 2). To date, forty-three policies have been reviewed by the working group. A strong work plan is in place and review sessions are on a regular weekly schedule, so the pace of progress is expected to continue steadily. Policies will be released for public review starting mid-April, and it is expected that the process will be ongoing as additional chapters are ready for public review.

STAGE 2: COORDINATE WITH NEIGHBORING MUNICIPALITIES

The Village has taken the recommendation of Executive Order 203 and coordinated with neighboring localities in their collaborative reviews. The Officer-in-Charge and the lead project Trustee have observed the Police Panels in the neighboring Town of Kent and that of Putnam County. They have reviewed survey data and participated in discussions in Kent, observed panel sessions at the County level, read the survey results and reports of the stakeholder groups at the County level, attended the public hearing on the County’s draft plan for compliance with Executive Order 203, and made reports to the Board of Trustees and the public on what they have observed. Clear lessons were learned to inform the successful conduct of Cold Spring’s collaborative: to appropriately center people of color and members of other potentially vulnerable or marginalized stakeholder groups; to avoid “siloeing” of participants by identity, which limits cross-pollination of ideas and approaches; and to create work plan timelines that accommodate meaningful and in-depth consideration and conversation.

STAGE 3: INITIAL COMMUNITY OUTREACH WITHIN THE VILLAGE OF COLD SPRING

(a) Dissemination of Information

All meetings, discussions and reviews where public input is required are being posted broadly, including via the Village website and Facebook page, as well as advertising in the two local papers. This plan and supporting documentation is being made available via the Village website, as well. Ongoing Community Stakeholders Group Meetings will be recorded and available for public review.

(b) Community & Visitor Surveys

A Village-wide electronic survey to residents and business owners is in the process of being launched via SurveyMonkey. The Board of Trustees invested in the purchase of the SurveyMonkey software to ensure that a full range of survey formatting and analytical capabilities are available to achieve best results. The survey will give baseline feedback on the community's relationship with its police department. Further, survey results will help the Village to begin to narrow focus on issues of community concern.

Initial public feedback on the survey proposal indicated two concerns: (1) to have the survey in the field longer than had been provided for the County level survey, and (2) to utilize multiple modes for Villagers to respond. To that end, the Village Trustees will view initial responses as stage 1 data collection. The Village intends to deploy paper surveys and, potentially, offer to meet or have calls with residents to record their responses via interview format. Survey questions were developed by the Board of Trustees, working in consultation with community members who specialize in polling, market research and police reform research.

Additional surveys are also being planned for residents of the surrounding Town who interact with our department, as well as visitors to the Village. Understanding how these groups interact with the Cold Spring Police Department may be useful and revelatory.

STAGE 4: CONTINUING COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS & POLICY REVIEW

A Community Stakeholders Group is being formed to: (1) provide comment and feedback on the ongoing review of police policies; (2) assess areas of concern identified in the surveys; (3) address the key questions in the executive order; and (4) make periodic reports to the Village Board and the public.

Per the Executive Order, areas of exploration and discussion for the Community Stakeholders Group will include: community policing; strategies to address racial disparities and build trust; long-term, ongoing engagement between CSPD and the community; deployment of de-escalation strategies; community and policing approaches to mental health and addiction; transparency and accountability.

In accordance with Executive Order 203, the Village Board of Trustees will ensure that the Community Stakeholders Group includes residents who can offer insights representing the following perspectives: Black, Indigenous and People of Color; LGBTQIA+; Immigrants and New Americans; Residents with Limited English Proficiency (with accommodation made for translation whenever possible). Others who express interest will be welcomed to participate as well.

Portions of the Executive Order call for inquiry into necessary and desired areas of officer training and recruitment. Additionally, support for officer wellness and well-being is encouraged. The Village will seek the contribution of CSPD officers on these topics, as well as resident families of law enforcement officers.

When needed, the Community Stakeholders Group will be able to access the guidance of local mental health and social service professionals, representatives of local faith communities, as well as the County DA's office and Legal Aid. The Officer-in Charge is committed to working with the Community Stakeholders group at any and all stages of the process.

PROPOSED TIMELINE FOR CONTINUED ENGAGEMENT

April to May 2021	Resident Survey in the field
Mid-April 2021	Begin release of new CSPD policies for review; policies adopted by the Village Board as reviews are completed so that they are in place for use by CSPD
By 30 April 2021	Community Stakeholders Group participants recruited
Mid to Late May	Resident Survey results released to the public
Beginning Mid-May	Community Stakeholders Group convened to review resident survey results, new CSPD policies, and address key questions
Summer/Fall 2021	Surrounding community and visitor surveys developed and launched
Fall 2021	Community Stakeholders Group considers findings from surrounding community and visitor surveys in relation to EO203 Key Questions
Late Fall 2021	Surrounding community & Visitor survey results released to the public
Early Winter 2022	Community Stakeholders Group documents findings and recommendations
February 2022	Public Meeting to review Community Stakeholders Group findings and recommendations
March 2022	Action plan for incorporating recommendations developed by the Village Board and presented to the public